

STATE BOARD INSPECTOR ADVISES OPENING SCHOOLS.

Unreservedly Declares to Gathering of Representative Citizens That Danger Is As Great on Streets As in Class Room.

Shall the schools open on the 20th, was the question earnestly discussed by seventeen representative business men, town officials, doctors and school authorities at an informal gathering held last night, in consultation with Dr. J. W. Morgan, medical inspector for the Colorado State Board of Health who had been called to Gunnison by local health officials, to view the situation.

After free discussion, the motion was made and passed unanimously that the final decision be left to a committee consisting of the local school boards, Dr. N. J. Hyatt as representative of the Town Board of Health and Dr. Morgan representative of the state board today. This was followed by a motion carried unanimously by show of hands that it was the sense of those present that "the opening of all schools shall take place on the 20th of January, provided the committee consisting of the school board, the local health authority and the representative of the State Board of Health deems it safe."

Dr. Morgan has been making the rounds of the state and is familiar with conditions in Colorado and has studied the matter from A to Z. The doctor expressed the opinion unreservedly that it was the right and proper thing to open the schools, under certain restrictions which he named. He felt the children were just as safe in the schools as on the streets. We are taking certain chances in everything that we do, stated the doctor. We are taking certain chances in our rooms, in our houses and on the streets, and he emphasized the case of Chicago, which has an exceptionally good record under influenza conditions and attributes it largely to the careful medical inspection in the schools, which traced incipient cases home to the families and was thus enabled to protect the community. Dr. Morgan advised not only medical inspection of the pupils, but careful training of the teachers, who are with the pupils all day long and by advice and training of the local health physician can soon learn to detect instantly the half dozen symptoms which accompany the disease. He did not minimize the fact that there are times where probably the disease can be imparted by those who are coming down, but are not yet developed cases. He advised that every student should be compelled to bring at least two clean handkerchiefs a day and to use them in case of the slightest cough or running at the nose. He advised careful washing of the pupils' hands, avoiding swapping of pencils and suggested a number of other minor safeguards. He stated that practically every school in Colorado is now running, and he did not know of any town where health conditions are better than in Gunnison.

An interesting statement was that according to the latest government report there is no mortal case of influenza in the state.

It was after listening with great care to the doctor and consequent free discussion that the above unanimous agreement of opinion was made, even by those who came to the meeting very much opposed to opening the schools.

It was stated by the school authorities if beginning is made in the 20th there is just time by eliminating everything but the bare essentials, making half of each Saturday, etc., to complete the school work of the year and graduate the classes on July 11th. There will then be time for a summer school, of six weeks before the fall work of 1919-1920 begins. Very serious consequences were feared if longer delay is made and the facts concerning this were plainly set before the gathering. It is proposed to secure not only the most expert medical advice, but the constant services of one or perhaps two trained nurses from towns that have gone thru the epidemic.